All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. In addition to the above, 750 posts of Lieutenant Colonels have been upgraded to Colonel's rank. The tenure of SSC officers has also been extended from 10 years to 14 years.

Besides, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained Image Projection and publicity campaigns to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, counselling and motivational talks in schools, colleges and NCC camps are also some of the other measures in this direction. A total number of 100 vacancies per year are earmarked for NCC cadets, holding 'C certificates for commissioning as Short Service Officers. Besides, officers of the Territorial Army can opt for Short Service Commission in the regular Army on voluntary basis.

The Government has also appointed VI Central Pay Commission to go into the question of revision of pay and allowances etc. of all the Government servants including the Armed Forces. The three Services have presented a joint memorandum to the Pay Commission suggesting revision of pay and allowances and other service conditions .The matter has also been discussed with the Pay Commission by the three Service Chiefs and officers in the Ministry of Defence.

Change of offset condition

671. SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any move to change the mandatory offset condition for imported defence items which mandates the foreign supplier to compulsory access 30 per cent of the import value from an indigenous source; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Offset clause as incorporated in Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)-2006 is applicable for all procurement proposals where indicative cost is Rs. 300 Crores and more, and the schemes are categorized as 'Buy (Global)' involving outright purchase from foreign/Indian vendors and 'Buy and Make with Transfer of Technology' i.e. Purchase from foreign vendor followed by Licensed Production DPP-2006 also prescribes varying offset percentages above 30%.

The DPP-2006 provides for review of the procurement procedure after every two years in the light of the practical experience gained in its implementation.

Increase in earthquakes

672. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that earthquakes are rapidly increasing these days;